

Columbus scores high in seat belt program

Monsanto is very active in promoting driver safety for its employees and their families. The Monsanto Muscatine plant's Family Safety and Health team recently partnered with two local high schools to share their knowledge and experience in raising seat belt awareness.

This effort involved conducting an initial seat belt check to determine the level of compliance at each of the schools and then working with the school administration and driver safety instructors to raise the level of awareness around the importance of wearing seat belts.

The initial seat belt check conducted in the fall of 2008 showed a 66% compliance at Wapello High School and a 77% compliance at Columbus Community High School. Both schools were commended in the improvement in seat belt compliance, and were awarded a check from Monsanto for use in the continuing education of driver safety.

Presenting the check to Columbus is Reggie Burke, representing the Monsanto Safety Team, student representatives Remi Dean and Mackenzie Griffin, Columbus High School Principal, Matt Kingsbury and Al Perkins, Iowa Traffic Safety Coordinator.



Letts man injured in hunting accident last Sunday

LETTS – A Letts man was injured Sunday when his gun accidentally discharged while hunting coyotes in Louisa County at approximately 1:30 p.m.

Dennis Hiller, 47, was putting his rifle over his shoulder when the sling became unhooked from the forearm part of the gun. The gun discharged when it hit the ground striking him in the upper portion of his right arm.

Hiller was flown by helicopter to University Hospitals in Iowa City where he was undergoing surgery Sunday afternoon.

The incident was investigated by the Louisa County Sheriff's Department and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Correction

In last week's Gazette we inadvertently stated that Delmore Evans served in the Navy during World War II. Delmore served in the Army. We regret any inconvenience the error may have created.

Open House at Louisa County Clinic



An Open House will be held at the Community Health Centers of Southeastern Iowa's Louisa County Clinic on February 27 from 4-7 p.m. The clinic is located at 241 Colonels Drive, Columbus Junction. The event offers the opportunity for the public to tour this new facility and meet some of the clinic staff. The Open House is organized as a CJPM with refreshments provided by Columbus Community Club. Pictured above is a view of the clinic's reception area.

City Council considers flood control plans

By Jim Rudisill

An effort by Columbus Junction city officials to mitigate future flooding problems would be aided by the installation of a flood control pump north of the Columbus Motel, members of the city council were told during the council's regular February 11 meeting. Public works department staff member Fred Lukavsky told officials that water from the downtown and higher bluffs eventually flow towards a small pond behind the motel and a pump in that area could be used to pump it over the levee.

He said the proposed pump would be capable of pumping 5000 gallons per minute, which was about three times the amount pumps provided by the Army Corps of Engineers during last summer's flooding could handle. Normally the water that flows into that area is piped under the levee through a pipe. The pipe has a flap valve on the river side of the levee however that automatically closes during high water, causing water on the other side of the levee to rise.

A second pipe closer to Highway 92 helps drain the area between Caseys and the downtown, but it is also equipped with a flap valve that closes during high water. Lukavsky said if the city received a heavy rainfall while the drainage pipe valves

are closed, the water behind the levee would likely rise even more. "If we get a big (storm), we could be in trouble," he told the council.

Mayor Dan Wilson agreed if there had been heavy rains last summer while the Iowa River was up, the flooding could have been even more severe. Wilson said the city needed to continue investigating essentially two issues relating to Columbus Junction's flooding potential. "We need to work with (city engineer) John Meyer on (upgrading) levees and deal with all the water," he said. Installing a pump would help assure people the city's low ground could continue to be used during high water and that might promote some stalled reconstruction efforts in the area, he suggested.

Wilson also pointed out the estimated \$40,000 cost to install the pump might be covered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). However, if FEMA funding is not available, Wilson said a recently approved grant program through the state of Iowa could help. He said Columbus Junction could be eligible for \$108,000 to assist with flood recovery efforts.

Council member Phil Kaalberg said the city needed to move forward with flood prevention programs. "Waiting is not an option," he said.

The council agreed and approved

his motion to continue the investigation into the pump installation and financing.

In other action, the council reviewed the city's proposed 2009-10 budget and agreed to hold a February 25 public hearing on the spending plan. According to the published budget, the city is expecting to spend around \$1,280,666 next year, with revenue projected to be \$1,322,122. Officials said the tax levy would decrease slightly from \$11.63 per \$1000 valuation to \$11.57.

The published budget showed expenditures for public safety would grow from the re-estimated 2009 cost of \$320,198 to \$338,880. There would also be higher costs for public works and debt service. Decreased spending for culture and recreation, community and economic development, general government and business type/enterprises were projected.

Road Use Tax (RUT) expenditures are projected to be \$170,050, which would match the anticipated state revenue for that fund. The biggest outlay from the RUT Fund is projected to be \$86,901 for street repair work. Other costs include salaries, utilities, motor vehicle supplies and New Heritage Subdivision street light loans.

Water Fund expenditures and revenue are both projected to be \$246,000. Sewer Fund revenue and

expenditures are both set at \$178,700

In final action, the council accepted a \$22,395 low bid from Mincer Ford for a new Ford Explorer to replace a current police squad car. The council also agreed to ask the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) for additional time to consider a possible purchase of property across Second Street from the civic center. The DOT contacted the city earlier this month and said it would consider a sale of the property, but told the city it needed to respond by February 12.

The city had asked the DOT about the property several months ago, but had not received any response until it followed up with a recent inquiry. After the inquiry, the DOT sent the letter to the city, advising the city needed to act or it would offer the property to the public.

Tim Wink, chairman of the city's economic development commission, also reported to the council on recent beautification efforts being investigated by the commission. He said representatives of the Keep Iowa Beautiful and Keep America Beautiful organizations had recently visited the community and were interested in developing projects. He said the representatives plan to return in a few months. In the meantime, the commission would continue to seek public input into potential projects.

Briefly -

City Council to meet tonight

The City of Columbus Junction will hold a Public Hearing and Regular Council Meeting today, Wednesday, February 25, 2009, at 5:30 p.m., in the New Civic Center/City Hall. The public hearing will be on the proposed 2009-2010 budget.

Columbus City Council vacancy

The City of Columbus City has a vacancy on the Council and is looking for anyone willing to serve as a Council Member. Please contact Mayor Mark Shear or City Clerk Lisa Hills or you may submit your name to the City by February 28th, 2009.

School Vocational Committee to meet

The Columbus Vocational Advisory Committee is meeting Tuesday, March 3 in the HS Vocational Building. The meeting begins at 5:30 PM. Visitors are welcome.

Etude Club to meet

Etude Club will meet in the United Methodist Church of Columbus Junction on Tuesday, March 3, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. with Stephanie Duncan as hostess. The plan is for an intensive practice on club chorus music.

Meal Site's Thursday Coffee

The Meal Site's 4th Thursday coffee will be held on February 26th in the Hope Bible Church basement at 8:30 a.m. Everyone is welcome.

Kindergarten Round-Up

Will your child be old enough to attend school at Roundy Elementary, Columbus Junction, IA, this Fall? Roundy Elementary is preparing for Kindergarten. If your child was born before September 15, 2004 and is not currently enrolled in the Columbus Preschool Program, KFC Preschool, or the Great Beginnings Preschool Program, please call the school at 728-6218.

¿Usted cree que su hijo/a tendrá la edad necesaria para empezar el Kindergarten en el Otoño del 2009?

¿Tendrá su hijo/a la edad necesaria para asistir a la Escuela Primaria Roundy en Columbus Junction, IA este otoño? La Escuela Primaria Roundy se está preparando para Kindergarten—Si su niño/a nació antes del 15 de Septiembre del 2004 y no está inscrito actualmente en el Programa de Preescolar de Columbus, el Programa Preescolar de KFC, o en el Programa Preescolar Great Beginnings, por favor llame a la escuela al 728-6218.

Cattlemen's Banquet scheduled

The Louisa County Cattlemen's Association will hold its annual Banquet today, Wednesday, February 25, 2009, at the American Legion in Columbus Junction. The event will start with a social hour at 5:30 p.m. Dinner will be served at 6 p.m. Tickets will be \$10 at the door, or in advance. Entertainment will be by Brooke Turner. For more information and tickets, call Wade Edwards at 319-657-3054.

Lenten Study at CJ Methodist

Come and join us for soup on Wednesday, March 4, at 6 p.m. At 6:30 p.m., we will be showing a movie to the students. Adults will have a short hymn sing followed by a Bible study. Each Wednesday night through April 1, we will have soup and fellowship. The public is invited. Bring your family and friends. NOTE: If you would be willing to help during these evenings, please let Marsha know.

Louisa Longbeards Banquet

The Louisa Longbeards Chapter of NWF is hosting their ninth anniversary Hunting Heritage Banquet on Saturday evening, March 7, 2008. The event is being held at Briggs Civic Center, Wapello. Doors open to the public at 5:30 p.m. for viewing auction items. A rib-eye supper will be served at 6:30 p.m. Merchandise to be auctioned includes guns, framed pictures, a rocking chair, sculptures, knife set, NWF wooden chest, etc. Raffle tickets will be available for a chance on guns and merchandise at the banquet. Purchase your Sportmen's Tier Raffle ticket before March 1 to receive an extra \$20 worth of general raffle tickets. To renew your turkey membership and purchase banquet tickets, contact Todd Shutt, 210 Pleasant Street, Wapello, Iowa 52653. If you have any questions, Todd's phone number is 319/572-1522 or e-mail is t_shutt@hotmail.com.

Radio Club to hold SKYWARN training

The Muscatine Amateur Radio Club will host SKYWARN severe weather spotter training on Monday, March 9th at 6:30 pm in the upper level meeting room at the Musser Public Library, 304 Iowa Avenue in Muscatine. The class is free and lasts two hours. No registration is required. For more information, call 563-263-3097.

PEO to meet

The next meeting of PEO Chapter CX will be held at the home of Jennifer Huston on Monday, March 2 at 7:00 pm. The meeting will be co-hosted by Dana Howell and the program will be "Election and Installation of Officers" and "Delegate and Alternate to Convention." All members are encouraged to attend.

Prevent Child Abuse Iowa to meet

Prevent Child Abuse Iowa - Louisa County Council will meet Thursday, March 5th following the Interagency meeting at the Briggs Center in Wapello. 10:00 a.m. -11:00 a.m. Anyone interested is welcome to attend. Contact Lori Kuntz, Stork's Nest at 319-527-6378 for more information.

Development Center seeks Volunteers

The Community Development Center, Civic Society and Horizons Project are co-hosting a volunteer summit on Wednesday, March 4 at 5:30 pm at the Civic Center. The purpose of the meeting is to present current and upcoming community projects and enlist volunteers to help make them successful. Among the projects offered will be the farmers market, adult internet classes, puppetry workshop, youth projects, immersion weekends and English tutoring. New project ideas are welcome. The summit will last an hour and refreshments will be served. For more information contact Mallory or Nitza at 319-728-7971.